

Lake Sumter

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

NEW VISION COUNCIL FOUR-YEAR DEGREE RECOMMENDATIONS

June 2, 2011

2011-2014 Strategic Goals

1. Strategic Goal I: Enable Students to Achieve Their Goals
2. Strategic Goal II: Collaborate and Partner to Achieve Institutional Goals
3. Strategic Goal III: Build Excellence in Programs and Services for All
4. Strategic Goal IV: Create and Sustain a Culture of Continuous Improvement

General Conditions

- LSCC will pursue needed four-year degrees in the PIM model, i.e. in 2+2 or independently after consultation with partners
- There is strong demand for real world experience. Our niche will be to emphasize partnerships with employers through program co-op and internship components
- Our primary target audience is the non-traditional age working student
- “Whose workforce are we educating?” While we focus on meeting local employer needs, we must also meet the needs of local residents regardless of where they may work.

Criteria for Determining Need For Four-Year Degrees in District

- Workforce Demand – based on the LSCC Labor Market Study, Region 12 Top Occupations List for 2011-12, other workforce data
- Student Demand - based on surveys, focus groups and Majors of LSCC transfers to SUS
- Feasibility – based on college strengths, assets, capabilities, experience of other colleges
- Partnership possibilities – UCF Consortium, other SUS, St. Leo, other colleges

Highest Ranked Degrees

- Nursing –based on strong district workforce demand, NLN accreditation, potential concurrent program with UCF
- Organizational Management – based on broad workforce demand, capability to serve private and public sector needs, interest in co-op and internships, current faculty vacancy
- Environmental Science – starting A. S. degree, strong interest in green tech, related to agricultural needs, current Ph. D faculty , new science labs at Leesburg
- Agribusiness or AgriTech – serves agricultural workforce needs, strong interest in HS Academies, potential partnerships with FAMU or UF.

Highest Ranked Degrees

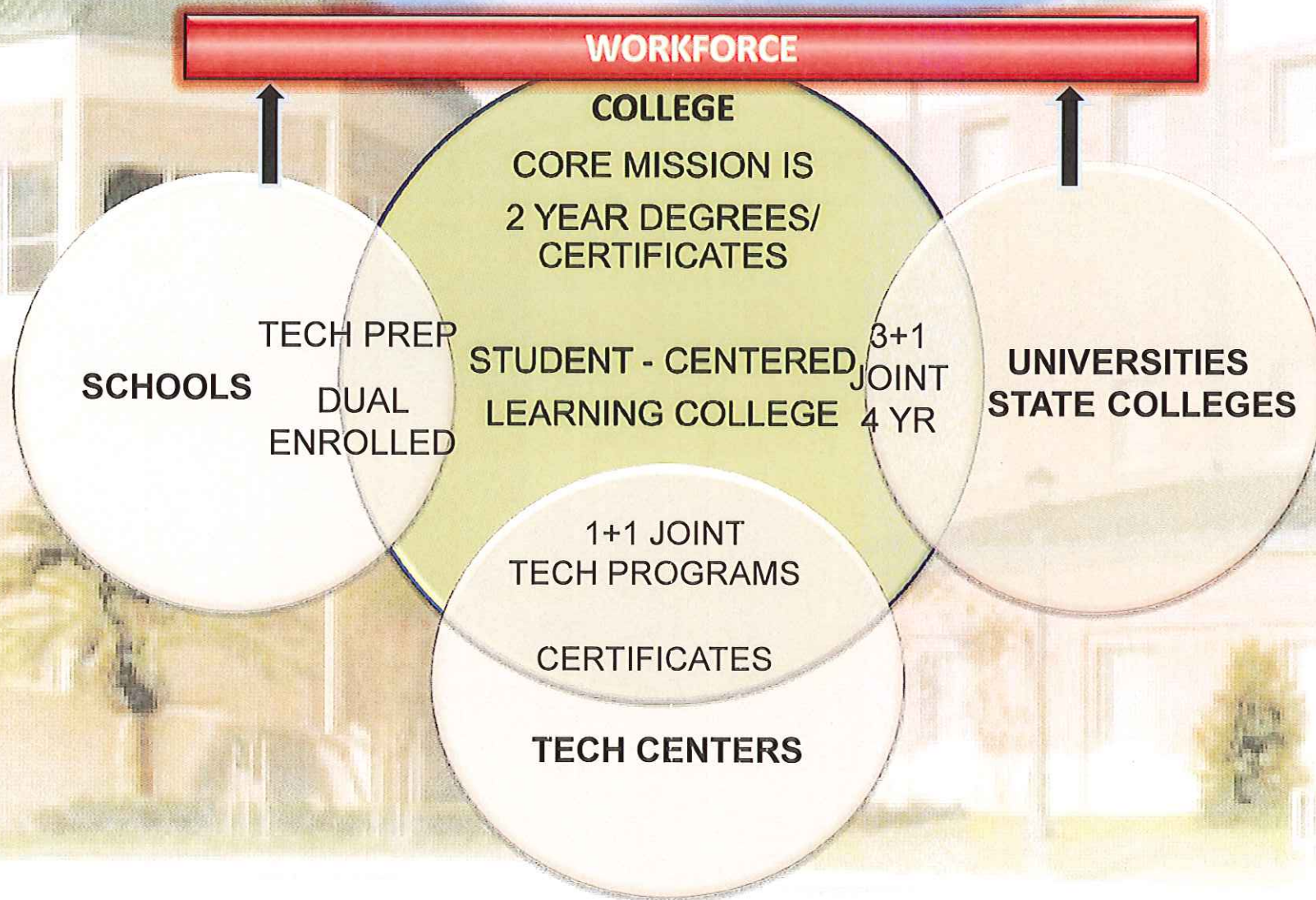
- Bio-Medical – emerging field with tracks in professional medical and medical engineering technology, Leesburg science labs and Ph. D. faculty, possible HS Academy in Sumter.
- Education – strong demand for Math & Science teachers, weak student interest. Early Childhood builds on strong A.S. with Ph. D. faculty or strengthen links to UCF
- Computer Technology – frequent mention but needs are diverse. Current focus on building two year programs in Digital Media and Cyber Security. Focus on new BAS in Software Dev. With UCF
- Public Safety – strengthen links to UCF on-line program. Address management needs through Organizational Management.

Next Steps

- Review findings with UCF and other interested institutions
- Pursue more specific feasibility analysis of top ranked programs
- Prepare recommendations to Board of Trustees
- Initiate Application for Approval by State Board of Education
- Prepare SACS Prospectus for Level II Accreditation

Lake-Sumter Community College

Partnership - Integrated Model (PIM)





LABOR MARKET STUDY REPORT

May 2011

By

Robert Skolnik, Ph.D.



The Summary

1. Executive Summary

The New Vision Council was established by Lake Sumter Community College to investigate the possibility of offering four year degrees. For several years now the State of Florida has supported the entry of the community college system into that area formerly the prerogative of the state colleges and universities which previously had been protected by state laws and guidelines. Six years ago only four community colleges offered four year degrees, today the number has grown to eighteen! The New Vision Council has recommended that Lake Sumter join this group, but prior to making any decisions regarding the specific degrees to offer, a recommendation was made to undertake a study focused on local employers and their workforce needs (as well as their perspective on the nature of workforce education in general). In addition, this study supports the Lake County Economic Action Plan goal: "Assure that we have an available and well-prepared workforce for existing, emerging and prospective businesses, and collaborate with Lake County educators to meet workforce needs and achieve educational excellence."

The study question charged by the New Vision Committee was:

What academic and technical four year degrees do employers in Lake and Sumter Counties consider important for LSCC to offer in order to support their workforce needs?

What was an important indirect result of conducting the study?

- Lake Sumter Community College has made a significant effort to connect with employers and show the willingness of the organization to address their concerns and initiate a dialogue. In essence, the study served as a bridge to the community.
- Expectations are that the results will be shared and discussed with employers.

What was the design and methodology conceived to answer the question?

- A qualitative study was deemed most appropriate as there was a desire to achieve a greater understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the employer than that possible through the use of surveys.
- Approximately forty employers were selected and interviewed in Lake and Sumter County.
- Several community meetings related to economic development and workforce development were attended.
- Two focus group style meetings were held under the auspices of the Leesburg Chamber of Commerce. Companies included a variety of businesses based in Lake County, central Sumter County and the Villages.

- Data from the interviews, meetings, focus groups and other documents were analyzed using social scientific methods and the results reported in this document.

What is the nature of the employers and the workforce focused on in the study?

- Major employment sectors interviewed in the study included health care, manufacturing, agriculture, education, public administration, tourism, construction, retail, services, tourism and new and emerging occupations.
- Employers are concerned that there are no jobs for new graduates and thus expectations may have to be tempered. The question became: What is the role of LSCC vis-à-vis economic development (see below).
- Major employers vary depending on the county of focus, i.e., different industries are dominant in Lake, Sumter, Seminole and Orange Counties.
- The identification also varies geographically within the same county. For example, 13% of the companies in Clermont are based in the construction industry, while in Leesburg it is closer to 9.5%. In Sumter County, the northern part of the county is dominated by Wildwood and the Villages while the southern maintains a more agricultural and rural nature and is centered in the towns of Bushnell and Sumterville.
- In a similar vein, the workforce is also regional in nature, that is, many cross county lines to work for employers in other counties. Whose workforce is being educated?
- The workforces in Lake and Sumter have fewer post high school degrees than those in neighboring counties and this has a potential impact on economic development.
- The population in Lake and Sumter Counties continue to grow, particularly in the number of residents over age 65, and these older workers tend to be active members of the workforce.

What degree areas were suggested by employers?

- In general, there was strong consensus, encouragement, and support for offering four year degrees in Lake and Sumter Counties.
- A major concern of employers is not for specific knowledge and skills, but rather in the basic qualifications that include a proper attitude, communication and critical thinking.
- The results indicate that there was general consensus among employers that the demand for more technical degrees and trades should guide LSCC in its choice of programs. Engineering technologies such as bio-medical, electrical, mechanical, and bio-fuel as well as a broad range of general trade and skilled technical areas were often mentioned.
- Health occupations were definitely the most often mentioned as either a need of a given employer or one perceived as the number one need by those in other industries. The primary need was for baccalaureate level nurses, but it was also recognized that any health field would be an area of need. It gets complicated with the number of certification level (as opposed to degreed) occupations there are in

the health field, but as this study was sensitive to education levels outside of the four year degree, they were certainly considered relevant.

- Public Safety including areas related to correctional institutions (Florida has one of highest prisoner populations in the country), as well as law enforcement, fire science, industrial safety and paramedics.
- Organization Management, either related to a specific field such as accounting or marketing, or as a more general degree (perhaps with an emphasis in a given area). In addition, many employers suggested that degrees in respective fields such as sales and marketing, construction management, international business management, public and non-profit management, health and medical office management or others would be useful.
- In a similar vein, computer technology was considered important as a general field, but also as specific sub-fields such as GIS or computer security. It was often pointed out that almost every workforce position today requires some knowledge of technology and thus it would be useful to have a method to integrate this into any given educational program.
- Education – particularly math and science teachers. There also appears to be potential for partnering with education (and actually health as well) in areas that might be considered continuing education.
- Agribusinesses are major employers in Lake and Sumter Counties and representatives from these industries suggested degrees related to this field such as agricultural economics, horticulture and other specific environmental specialties (e.g., waste water technicians).

2. Summary of Other Findings

What were the findings related to the business of education?

- There are at least three markets; the new student, the returning adult student and the current workforce with the latter providing a potential source of business development for LSCC.
- Two ways to look at the development of degree products would be a) survey the competition for open niches and b) offer programs in new and emerging occupational areas (such as biodiesel plant management).
- A concept that might be called "My Backyard" appeared, that is, the tendency for people to identify with their geographic center, i.e., looking for products and services that are closer to home.
- Most employers are not aware of the various educational opportunities offered at LSCC and are open to closer connections with the school.
- There are concerns about the flexibility in the delivery of the educational product due to limitations of work and home schedules with ideas such as Saturday classes and more on-line instruction being offered.
- LSCC's student customers offer challenges regarding service and also present opportunities related to market development – specifically, there is an unawareness on the part of students of the variety of occupations available to them.
- There are a number of possible collaborative efforts or joint ventures that need to be explored with UCF, UF, FAMU and other universities, the SBDC, Lake Tech and the high schools.
- There is a great amount of enthusiasm for internships or other experiential learning components as a foundation to any educational product offered and these can provide a basis for collaborative efforts with employers.

What is the relationship of the study to economic development?

- For employers currently located in the region, quality of life, location and cost of living are more significant than workforce availability as factors in economic development.
- Employers felt that bureaucratic obstacles were a hindrance to economic development and the concept of "concierging" business prospects might serve to make relocation and/or expansion more attractive.
- Customized education for employers by LSCC may be an attractive factor in economic development.
- The provision of new and emerging occupational education by LSCC can be an important impetus for economic development.

3. Summary of Recommendations

What recommendations are prompted by the study?

1. Consider regular communication mechanisms to employers.
2. Create a task force with other community partners, including employers, other educators, families, government, and social service agencies to address the issue of basic workforce attitudes .
3. Consider mapping employers for pockets of industry concentrations, perhaps by using economic development GIS data.
4. Be aware of differences among employers and treat each one as a unique entity – especially as they differ in industry, size or location.
5. Be aware of similarities among employers and maximize the value of similar industries, sizes or locations.
6. Be sensitive to employment realities. Consider placing more emphasis on placement and career development.
7. Consider the interests, needs, and potential of the older adult student population.
8. The definition of “local” when considering workforce needs should be expanded beyond immediate county lines.
9. Consider active representation in economic development forums in Sumter County.
10. Consider the product and the process based on the nature of the market being served.
11. Consider a business development effort aimed at the currently employed.
12. Review and consider the competitive analysis provided in the last strategic plan if there is one, or create a new analysis with special consideration given to workforce education and available niches.
13. Consider offering degrees in new and emerging occupations, even if only on a trial basis.
14. Participate in and encourage regional approaches to workforce education, but offer local solutions.
15. Develop a marketing strategy aimed at keeping employers informed and engaged.
16. Consider increasing availability of online course work as well as creative options such as weekend classes.
17. Determine and implement a method to measure customer loyalty.
18. Use the data acquired from these measures to develop a strategy to improve and continue to monitor levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.
19. Develop a mechanism to educate students regarding occupations and encourage exploration of those that they were not previously aware.
20. Create and implement a strategy aimed specifically at low income, disadvantaged and minority students.

21. Create a task force or reinforce current efforts towards expanding the partnership with UCF.
22. As above, create task force or reinforce current effort towards expanding partnerships with other universities.
23. Expand current collaboration efforts with Lake Tech Vocational School.
24. Explore mechanisms to make LSCC an active partner in high school CTE academies.
25. Revisit SBDC relationship particularly as it relates to current employers.
26. Develop plan and implement expansion of internship program.
27. Consider the workforce factor in economic development but do not place undue emphasis on this factor.
28. Counties should consider a “concierge” approach to economic development.
29. All players, government, private, and educational, should be teamed in the concierge approach to assure authentic community commitment.
30. The workforce needs of relocating or expanding business should consider being met on a customized basis. This not only eliminates any possible obstacle, but in fact becomes a positive motivator.
31. Consider the potential for those educated in new and emerging areas to provide an impetus for economic development.
32. Give special attention to those being educated in new and emerging areas and provide them with support that fosters entrepreneurial endeavors.

In the end, the study should be seen as a beginning. The data should provide a general direction and should now be followed by specific feasibility studies taking into consideration this data and other relevant factors.